DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 034 FL 022 894

AUTHOR Dame, Melvina Azar
TITLE Diverse Students and the School Library Media Specialist: Meeting the Challenge.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 13p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Advance Organizers; *English (Second Language); *Librarians; Library Collections; Limited English Speaking; Literacy; *Picture Books; Resource Materials; *School Libraries; Second Language Learning; *Visual Aids
IDENTIFIERS *Photographic Collections

ABSTRACT

The school library media specialist holds a strategic position to collaborate with English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers in designing activities that not only promote multicultural understanding, but also engage linguistically and culturally diverse students in the whole range of language learning and literacy. The unlimited resources of the school library media center can be adapted to benefit both ESL teachers and their students by adapting already existing resources to practices of second language acquisition methodology. The strategies described in this paper include the use of advance organizers, picture files, visuals, and books without words. (VWL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Diverse Students and the School Library Media Specialist: Meeting the Challenge

ED 381 034

The school library media specialist holds a strategic position to collaborate with ESL teachers in designing activities that not only promote multicultural understanding but also engage linguistically and culturally diverse students in the whole range of language learning and literacy. The unlimited resources of the school library media center can be adapted to benefit both ESL teachers and their students by adapting already existing resources to practices of second language acquisition methodology. The following strategies of using advance organizers, picture files, visuals, and books without words extend the use of resources that are most likely already in the media center's collection. With very few modifications and selective collection development, advance organizer files, multicultural files, and curriculum files can be developed and tailored to address the needs of ESL teachers and linguistically and culturally diverse students in each individual school community.

Advance Organizers:

The use of advance organizers is a strategy designed by David Ausubel to enhance classroom content learning. David Ausubel maintained that the information-processing system of the human being is a set of ideas which provides anchors for new information or ideas which in turn provides a storehouse when new meanings are acquired (1960). Central to enhancing the learning process for students with language needs is the strategy of building learning upon prior learning and knowledge. Based on this view of how learners process information, the school library media specialist can use this strategy to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students and provide resources for ESL teachers.

Most especially for language needs students, the optimal learning process involves connecting new ideas with old knowledge. If the material to be

FL022894

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Melvina Azar Dame
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

learned is completely new to the learner and completely unrelated to anything that he/she knows, the only learning that can take place is rote memorizations. To supply the prerequisite information, Ausubel used advance organizers, i.e. materials introduced in advance of the learning material itself that are appropriate to the material they preceed. The function of these advance organizers is to bridge the gap between what the students already know and what they need to know before they can successfully learn the new material.

Application of Ausubel's research findings are significant for librarians who are providing resources to ESL, Bilingual, and mainstream teachers and their students who are English-as-a-second language learners. The librarian can use a variety of advance organizers that guide the students through a visual and verbal description of the content embedded in the visuals. If a student has no previous background in the topic being presented, advance organizers will assist him/her in developing the schema. Schema is the background knowledge structure which a reader brings to the printed text or to learning. One of the main problems that ESL/LEP students encounter is the lack of a particular content schema that is not part of their cultural background. Since it is this schema which is necessary for the learning to be assimilated, the use of advance organizers provides this framework of knowledge and experiences to assist in comprehension of the content of the lesson.

Advance organizers are especially helpful in establishing schema in the content area of American culture. Without this background knowledge and without the language domain of the content, ESL/LEP students face difficulties in acquiring the knowledge presented through the school curriculum.

Through lesson planning, advance organizers can have multiple functions and take on a variety of forms. The librarian can provide advance organizers as resources for teachers to use in the classroom when introducing

new content material. By collaborating with classroom teachers, advance organizers used when teaching library skills can be selected to reflect the content area studies of ESL/LEP students. These visuals can be chosen based on the content of the English-as-a-second language curriculum or American culture. Integrating visuals into the library skills and information searching lessons of ESL/LEP students will motivate learning and increase the relevancy of the lesson.

A collection of visual materials designed especially for second language learners is found in The Mind's Eye: Using Pictures Creatively in Language Learning, (Maley, 1981). A list of publishers and vendors with suggested advance organizers and visual prompts selected for their relevance to American culture and content of the English-as-a-second language curriculum can be found in Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students: Strategies for the School Library Media Specialist, (Dame, 1993).

Picture Files:

Because picture files are invaluable teaching aids as advance organizers, a well developed picture file can be indispensable. The time and effort spent in collecting and organizing picture collections for use in educating linguistically and culturally diverse students will realize great returns.

An effective and viable advance organizer file will include visuals in any form: pictures, posters, video cassettes, sequence picture charts, overhead transparencies, magnet board, flannel board, filmstrips, comics, etc. Collaborating with ESL and mainstream teachers will provide the librarian with sufficient lists of themes and topics for an advance organizer collection. These might be visuals based on topics covered by the ESL core curriculum such as transportation, communities, community helpers, animals, power, machines, energy, community institutions and Anglo-American cultural knowledge.

Whether purchased for their ethnic-related content, or as visuals on American culture, or for curriculum related purposes, pictures and photographs can be used to develop a file for use by classroom teachers in introducing content area topics, as a vertical file for student use, as a file for the librarian's own teaching repertoire and as a file for multicultural bulletin boards and display purposes.

Picture files have many applications for use with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Visuals are an excellent way to promote communication, elicit responses, assist in word association, build vocabulary and teach new words and concepts. As a substitute for actual objects and actions, they bring real life situations into the teaching session and open up areas of conversations. Pictures that reveal meaning make comprehension easy and help enrich dialogue. Techniques and strategies for teaching second language learners rely heavily on these types of pictorial materials for introducing American culture and functions of American life.

Sources for Picture Files

Most pictures are free or inexpensive. Seeking out publishers and being placed on mailing lists will assure receipt of materials on a regular basis. Magazines, mail order catalogs, museum catalogs, embassies, travel bureaus, airlines, publishers' catalogs, and calendars are all quick and easy sources for clippings.

Commercially prepared pictures and aids for vocabulary development, concept development and phonics development are available from vendors and publishers mentioned in the above source (Dame, 1993). The Government Printing Office is an excellent source for picture file materials that are colorful, attractive and often times not available from any other source.

Sources for pictorial materials are identified in Directory of Ethnic Publishers and Resource Organizations (Joramo, 1979), a key source for

pictures which focuses on organizations and publishers who produce resources that are difficult to identify or locate. Ethnic organizations are also valuable resources for picture materials.

Strategies for Picture File Application

When used to introduce context and content, advance organizers serve as the initial step in the entire instructional strategy and are essential for the success of the steps that follow. For instance, depending upon the age and language level of the students, the instructional strategy for advance organizers might occur as follows:

°Using visuals, guide the students through a verbal description of the content embedded in the situation depicted by the visual.

°Conduct a discussion based on the questions of who, what, where, when and how. This will guide the students in analyzing the details and inter-relationships embedded in the visual.

°Follow up the visual analysis with motivating experiences such as shared composition with the teacher acting as scribe as the students dictate a story about the visual.

Visuals as a resource for instructional procedures

Many language instructional procedures can be modified to meet the linguistic and learning needs of limited English students by the use of visuals and realia as advance organizers. These methods, among many others, include the Shared Guided Composition Approach and the Language Experience Approach.

For instance, in using the Shared Guided Composition Method to improve comprehension, the teacher or librarian can add the techniques of visual and realia prompts as advance organizers. This introduction will better prepare students for successful completion of the various steps in the shared

composition procedure. This will provide easy to understand input about the content of the writing activity prior to the steps in the writing procedure. When first introducing the Shared Composition process to limited English students, the use of sequenced visuals like story pictures, cartoons or sequencing skill cards elicit further analysis. For this reason the visuals selected for instructional resources should provide a general but incomplete explanation which requires the students to form their own conclusions and make inferences.

The Language Experience Approach, a natural way of helping students acquire oral, reading and writing skills relies heavily on the use of pictures and visuals. The central concept of this approach is to make learning meaningful by using the student's own vocabulary and background of experiences to create text. This can be facilitated by using culturally relevant pictures and material. In the Language Experience Approach, stories of the students' own experiences or those derived from a picture or visual are dictated to the teacher, who writes them down exactly as dictated. Since both the content and the language of the stories come from the students, these stories are easy for students to relate to and understand.

Tips for Collecting Visuals

A network of sources for appropriate pictures and an approach of how to organize these resources are critical to an effective, accessible and meaningful collection. When collecting pictures to use with students for stimulating conversations, avoid pictures with printing on them. Pictures should be as simple as possible in the following categories:

°single object and single action pictures for developing vocabulary

°pictures of an entire situation for use as a topic for conversation

°pictures should include those that portray emotions like love, anger, sorrow and fatigue

°include pictures that illustrate concepts such as over, under, between, up, down and those that illustrate comparisons and contrasts, such as big-small, short-tall

Collaboration with the ESL and mainstream teachers will provided additional suggestions for topics and themes to be collected.

Multicultural Files

A multicultural file is used for activities and programs to promote understanding across all groups of students through the curriculum. Pictures in this file can be categorized by cultural or ethnic groups, subject, curricular content, or even alphabetically. The diversity of the student body, teacher suggestions, the school curriculum and the librarian's knowledge of the holidays and culture of the various ethnic groups will determine what pictures are collected. Posters for displays and bulletin boards, materials for student research and curriculum related materials would be appropriate for this type of picture file.

When teaching information literacy and library skills to multicultural students, using materials from students' own culture for drills, exercises, assignments and displays builds on their prior knowledge and lessens their anxiety by recognizing their culture and ethnicity. Because multicultural files provide visuals which help to validate the students' ethnicity, they are a significant factor in the success of curriculum and library-related lessons.

Teachers and librarians will find multicultural and ethnic materials indispensable when adapting activities to students for whom English is a second language. Multicultural materials also add a valuable resource to the reference collection for students studying the cultures and ethnic groups of other countries and cultures of ethnic groups in the United States. Teachers and students will find these materials invaluable both for their own understanding of ethnic groups and for curriculum-related materials. Programs to promote multicultural

understanding will also rely on these materials for accurate, timely and unbiased content.

Curriculum Files

A curriculum file, organized either by teacher name, curriculum subject or course title, will prove invaluable for librarians and teachers who collaborate in curriculum design and in developing instructional units. As a demonstration of its use, when the ESL student's teacher is presenting a unit on United States geography, a librarian would collect visuals from the curriculum file to give ESL students a foundation in the geography concepts to be presented by the classroom teacher. In addition, by using visuals of comparable geographic factors of the student's native country, comparisons and contrasts would be discussed. Students would then be directed to compare and contrast the effects of geographical factors on the culture, industry, food products, economics, and quality of life in their native country and the United States.

Acting as a coordinator in extending the above unit of study across the curriculum, the school library media specialist might provide resources for the following classes:

°English class-materials for oral conversation, journal writing, or report writing

°math class-materials for comparing costs of foods, and costs of living, food costs, measurements in recipes

°home economics class-materials for comparing nutritional values of comparable foods, comparable menus, methods of preparing foods, reading and following recipes

°health class-conclusions of the effect of diet and geography on individuals

°economics class-judgements regarding the effect of geography on economics and life style, effects of free enterprise vs government control of enterprise

°art class-works of art that reflect the geography of their native country and the United States

Books Without Words

Books without words can be used effectively as visuals to stimulate conversation and open areas of conversation. They can be used as elements of storytelling for language skills, shared composition, guided reading and language experience stories. Books in which the story is told entirely through pictures have wide appeal and are appropriate for all age levels. They can be used in the same way as advance organizers in building on the students' prior knowledge. They are also surprisingly helpful in developing some of the skills necessary for reading, such as handling a book and turning the pages beginning at the left-hand side and moving to the right. Language development can be stimulated through engaging the learner in story telling. As the student tells a story, he/she will become aware of how a story works and will develop an awareness of structural elements of a story such as beginning, ending, sequence, predictability, setting, climax, characterization, and actions of characters.

Books without words can also be used as a springboard to story writing and Whole Language activities for all age levels. Younger learners may want to write the story together. More advanced learners may prefer to write their own stories to accompany the pictures. Using books without words to write stories gives students the chance to be authors of their own publications.

Choose books that have a clear sequence of pictures, obvious predictability and those that are culturally relevant to the students. As the

students progress linguistically, pictures that portray American culture can be gradually included in using books without words.

References

Ausubel, David P. "The Use of Advance Organizers in the Learning and Retention of Meaningful Verbal Material." Journal of Educational Psychology 51 (1960): 267-272.

Dame, Melvina A. Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students: Strategies for the School Library Media Specialist. New York: Neil-Schuman, 1993.

Joramo, Majorie K. Directory of Ethnic Publishers and Resource Organizations. 2d ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 1979.

Maley, Alan, Alan Duff, Francoise Grellet. The Mind's Eye: Using Pictures Creatively in Language Learning. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Melvina Azar Dame

Melvina Azar Dame, a school library media specialist, is the author of *Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students: Strategies for the School Library Media Specialist*. Copies can be obtained by remitting $29.95 (plus $2.50 postage and handling) to Resource Associates, 83 Glenham Road, Cranston, RI 02921.